

To bring rain and supply baby spirits a *Wandjina* painting was retouched, normally just before the wet season was due to begin. The increase of animal and plant species was achieved by the retouching at the same time of their representations in the gallery. In the providing of baby spirits the *Wandjina* is fused with the rainbow serpent, *Ungud* or *Galeru*. The rainbow serpent lives in water holes and is believed to bring spirit babies to these pools, from which they are incarnated by the retouching of the *Wandjina* paintings. The rainbow serpent is also depicted in some *Wandjina* galleries.

True *Wandjina* paintings have previously been thought to be restricted to the territory of the Ungarinyin, Worora, Wunambul, Gwini and Gulari Tribes of the North Kimberley (Elkin, 1930, 1948, 1954; Capell, 1939; Schulz, 1956; Worms, 1955), though McCarthy (1957, 1958) points out that paintings somewhat similar to the *Wandjina* and *Galeru* occur as far east as Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Capell (1939) observed that the Unggumi Tribe had typical *Wandjina* myths, but he understood that

they did not have the paintings. However we now know that they do in fact possess *Wandjina* paintings in the numerous limestone caves of the Napier Range, near the southern border of their tribal territory. Moreover the Kuniandi, Bunaba, and Gidya Tribes also have painting of the *Wandjina-Galeru* type.

The distribution of the various tribes of the West Kimberley region with whom I have had contact is shown on Fig. 1, together with the locations of the various rock paintings described in this paper. The tribal boundaries were obtained from discussions with many members of the various tribes. Even so they can only be regarded as approximate, as the exact boundaries of the tribes prior to settlement by the white man are no longer well-known to the Aborigines.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor A. P. Elkin, with whom I corresponded on the subject of the paintings. His valuable encouragement and advice were largely instrumental in causing me to prepare this paper.

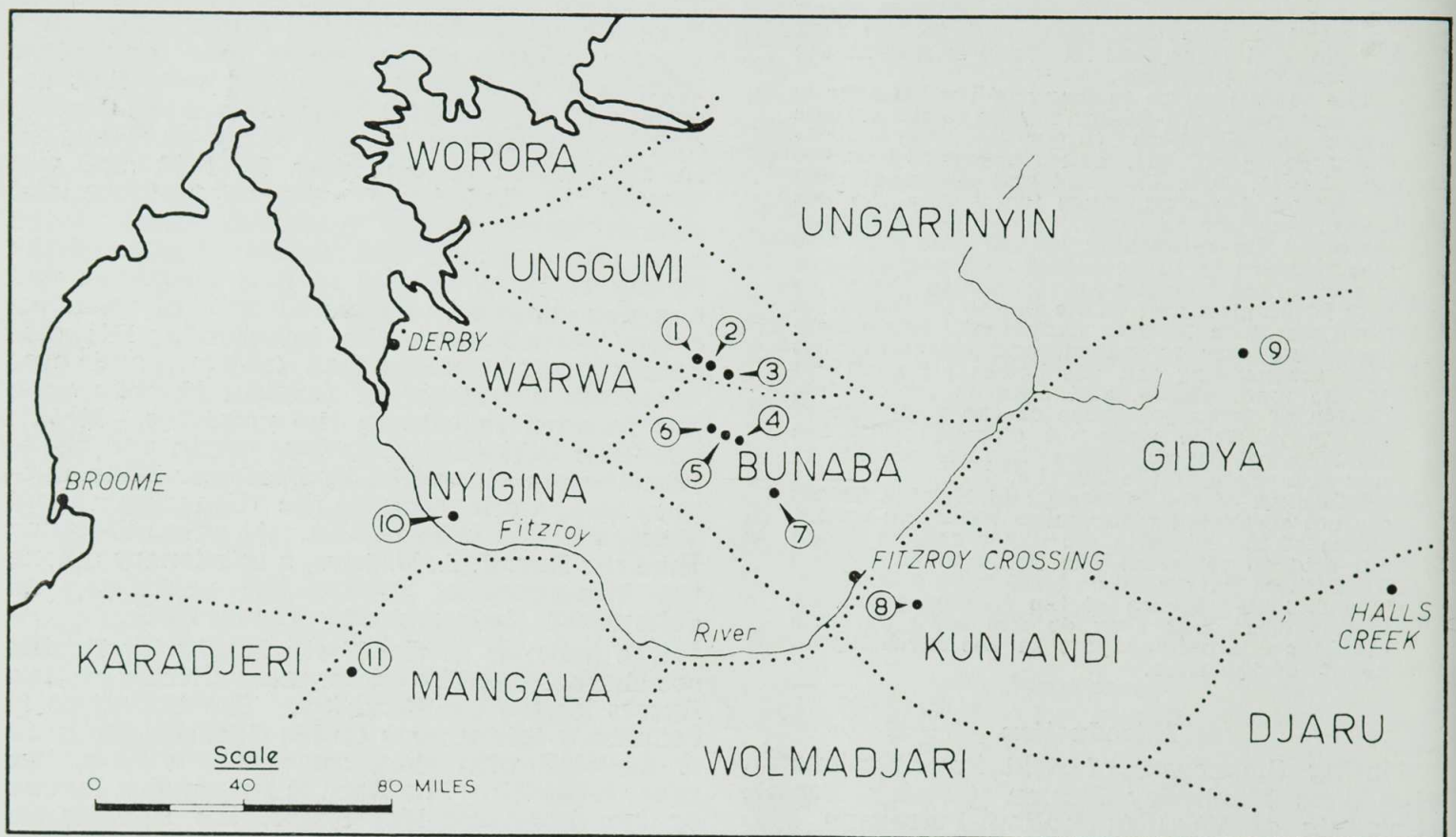
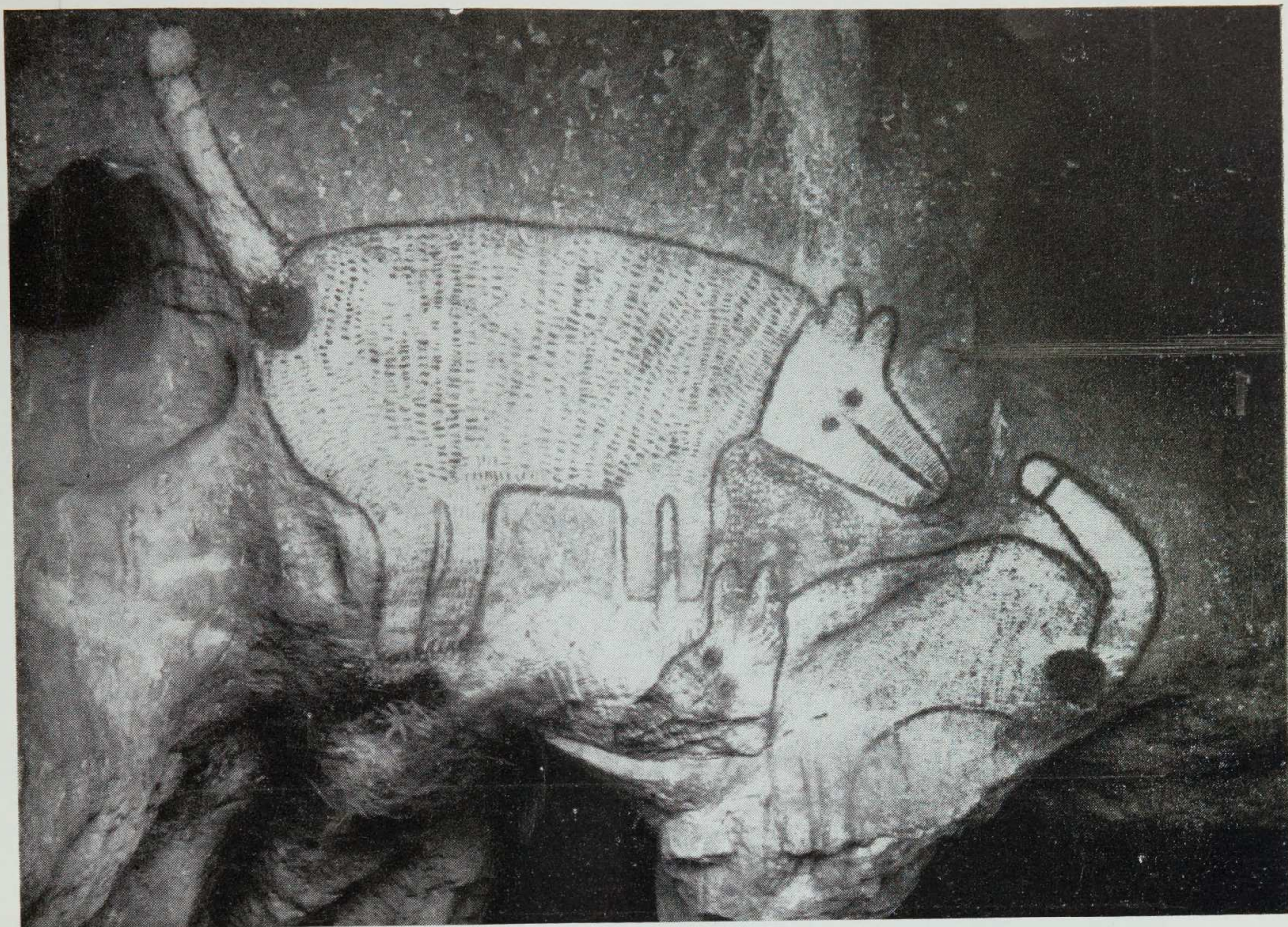


Fig. 1.—West Kimberley Region Showing Aboriginal Tribal Territories and Rock Painting Localities.

1. Cave beside Burrealumma Spring, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-north-east of the eastern entrance to Windjana Gorge.
2. Cave 300 yards south-east of the eastern entrance to Windjana Gorge.
3. Cave between Windjana Gorge and Carpenters Gap, about 1 mile from the gap, on the north side of the Napier Range.
4. Cave $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile south-east of Elimberrie Spring, on the north side of the Oscar Range.
5. Cave $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles west-north-west of Elimberrie Spring.
6. Rock shelter at the foot of the cliffs $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles west-north-west of Elimberrie Spring.
7. Cave beside Linesman Creek, on the south side of the Oscar Range, 4 miles north-west of 12-mile bore.
8. Cave in Menyous Gap, 20 miles south-east of Fitzroy Crossing.
9. Cave about 2 miles west-north-west of Elgie Cliffs homestead.
10. Rock shelter on the west side of Mt. Anderson, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of the station homestead.
11. Cave about $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile south-west of Dampier Downs homestead.

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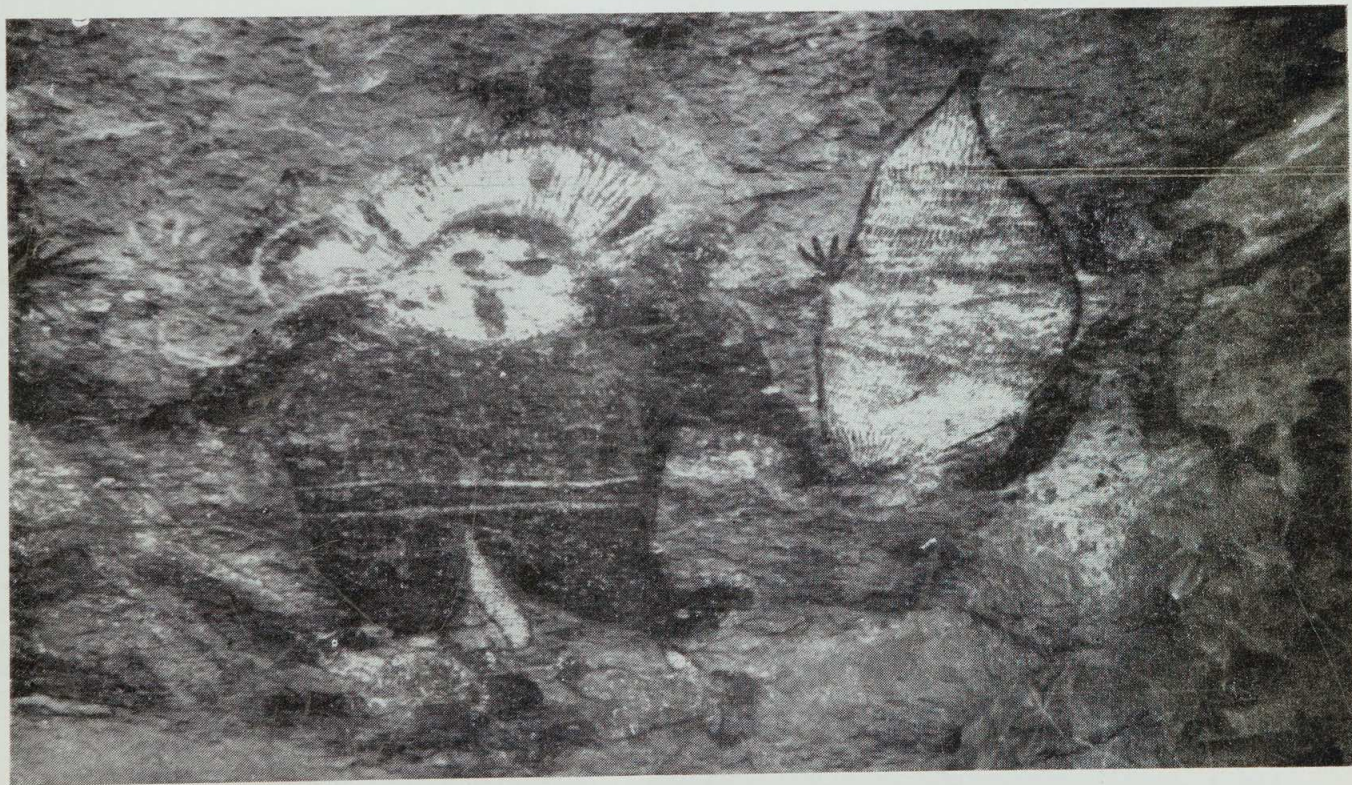
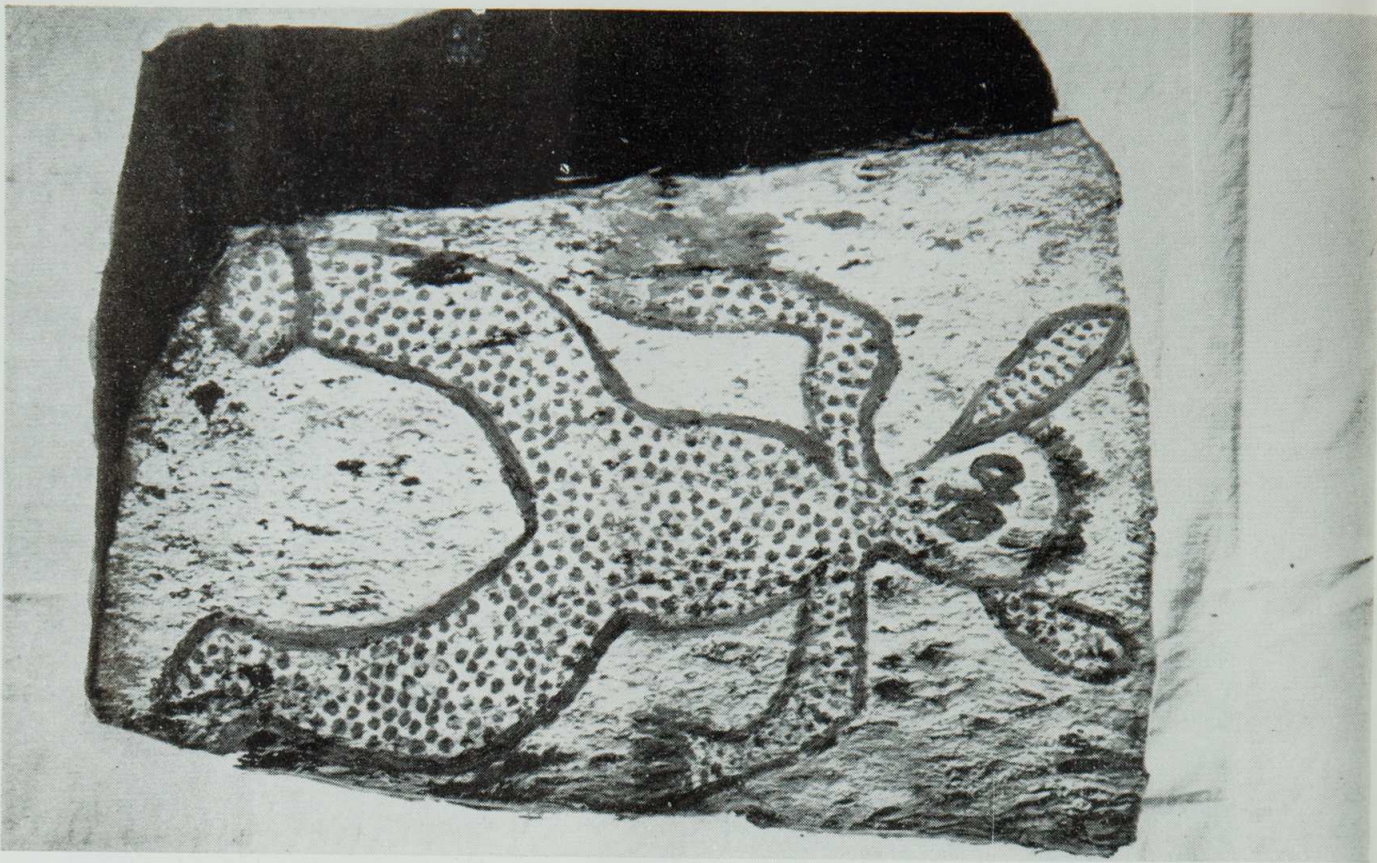


PLATE I

Fig. 1.—Dingo paintings near Buralumma Spring, in Unggumi tribal territory. Map locality 1.

Fig. 2.—Wandjina, yam, and (?) "lightning men" paintings, near the eastern entrance to Windjana Gorge. Note the two small human figures painted beneath the Wandjina. Map locality 2.

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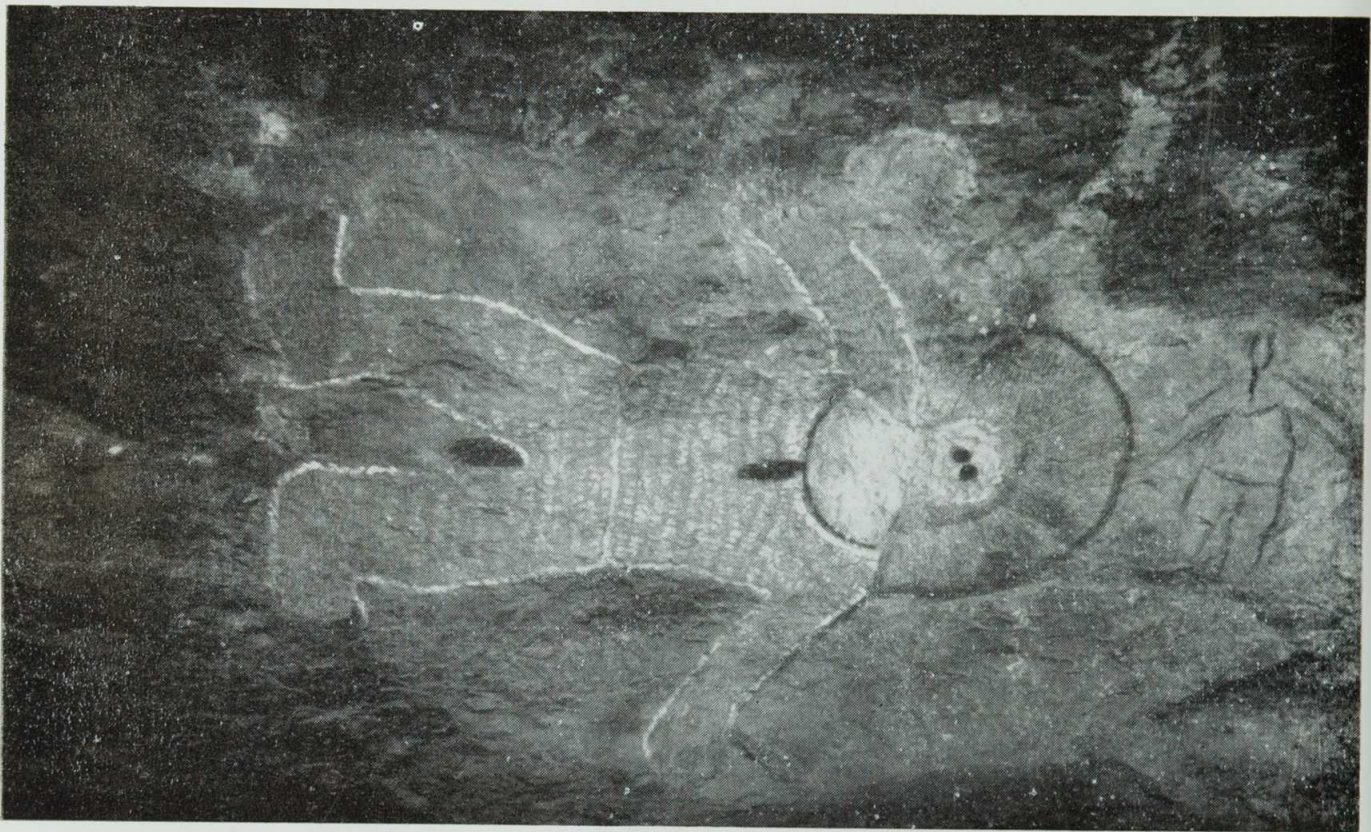
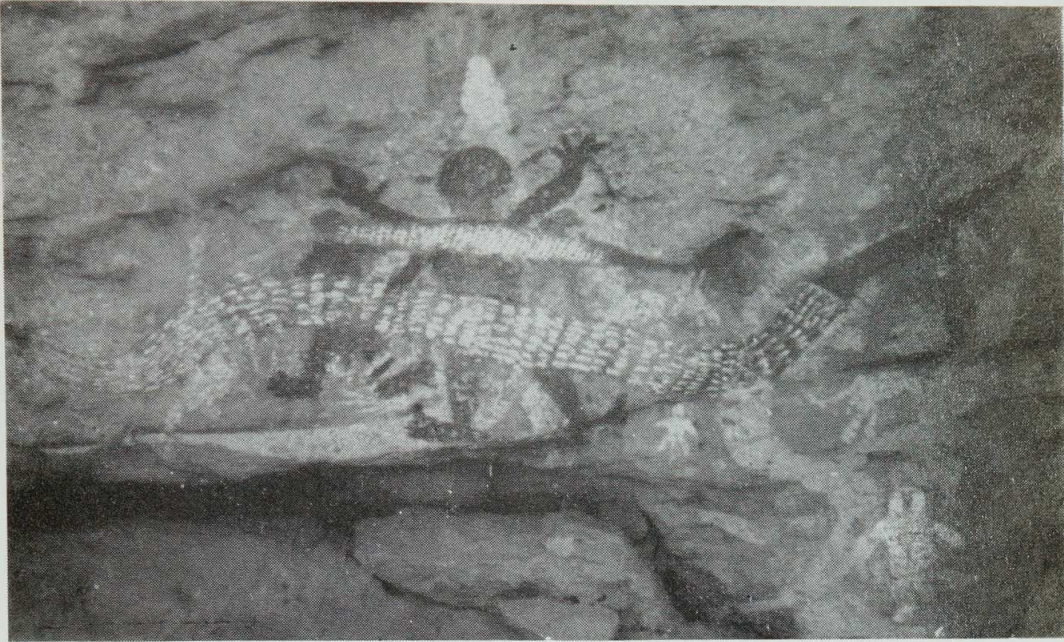


PLATE II

Fig. 1.—Bark painting of *Nura Nura*, the "lightning man." Worora Tribe, Mowanjum Mission, Derby.
 Fig. 2.—*Wandjina* painting in Unggumi tribal territory, between Carpenters Gap and Windjana Gorge, on the north side of the Napier Range. Note the small female *Wandjina* beside the main figure. Map locality 3.

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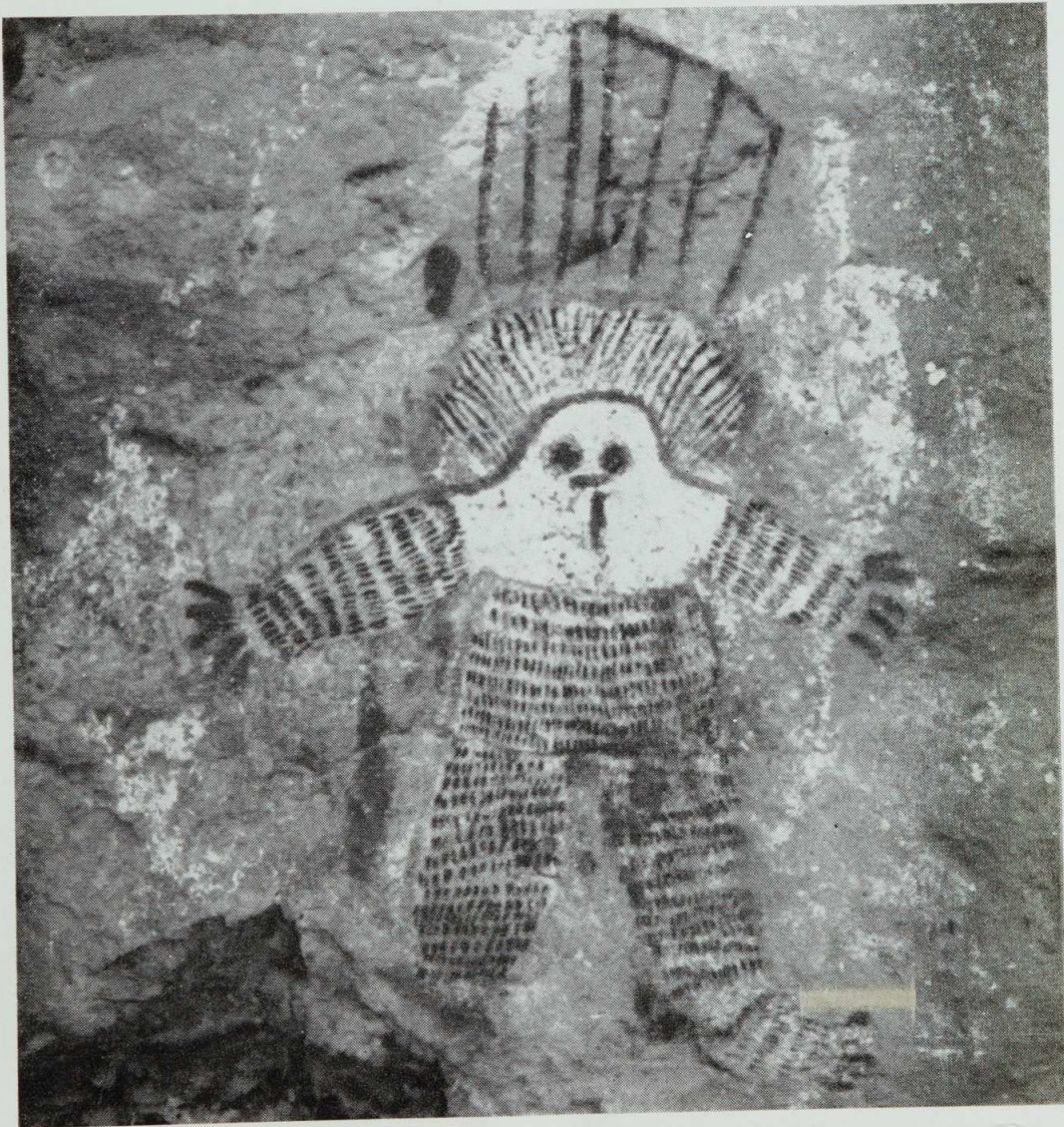


PLATE III

Fig. 1.—Paintings near Elimberrie Spring, in Bunaba tribal country. Shows the rainbow serpent (*Ungeroo*), a probable "lightning man," and various smaller figures. Map locality 4.

Fig. 2.—Nurunguni-Nowungoo paintings. Map locality 6.

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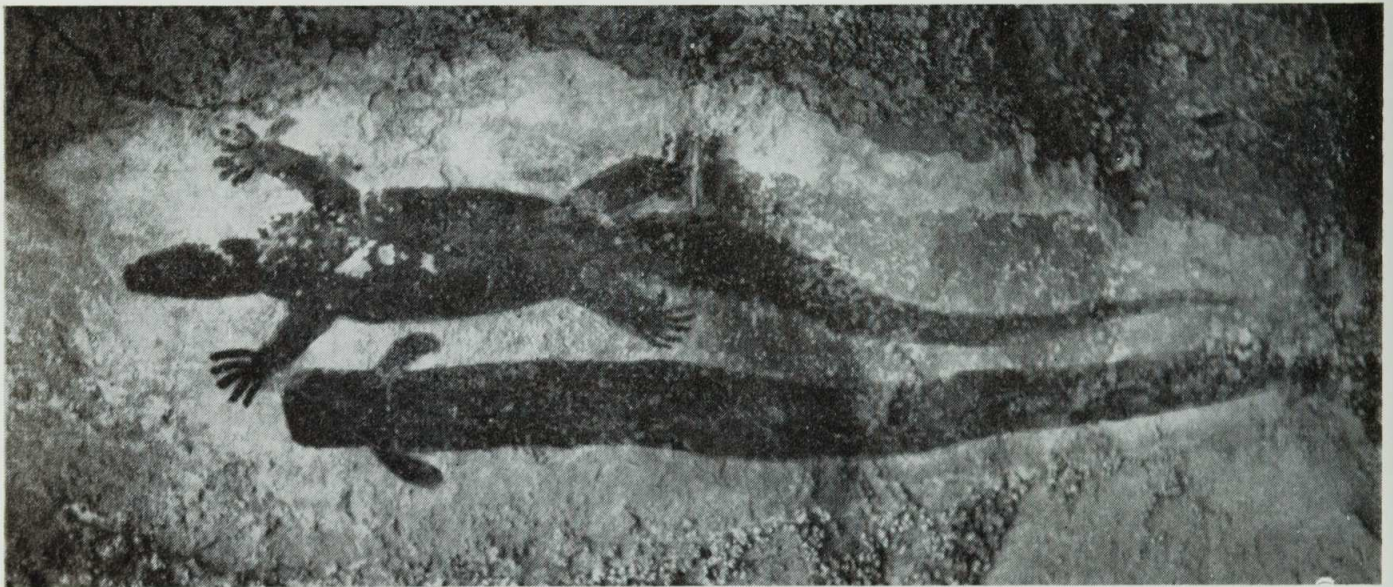


PLATE IV

Fig. 1.—Paintings of "stick-men" or "lightning men," on each side of a yam. Map locality 6.

Fig. 2.—Paintings of a Bungarra lizard and an eel, $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile south of map locality 6. Bunaba tribal territory.

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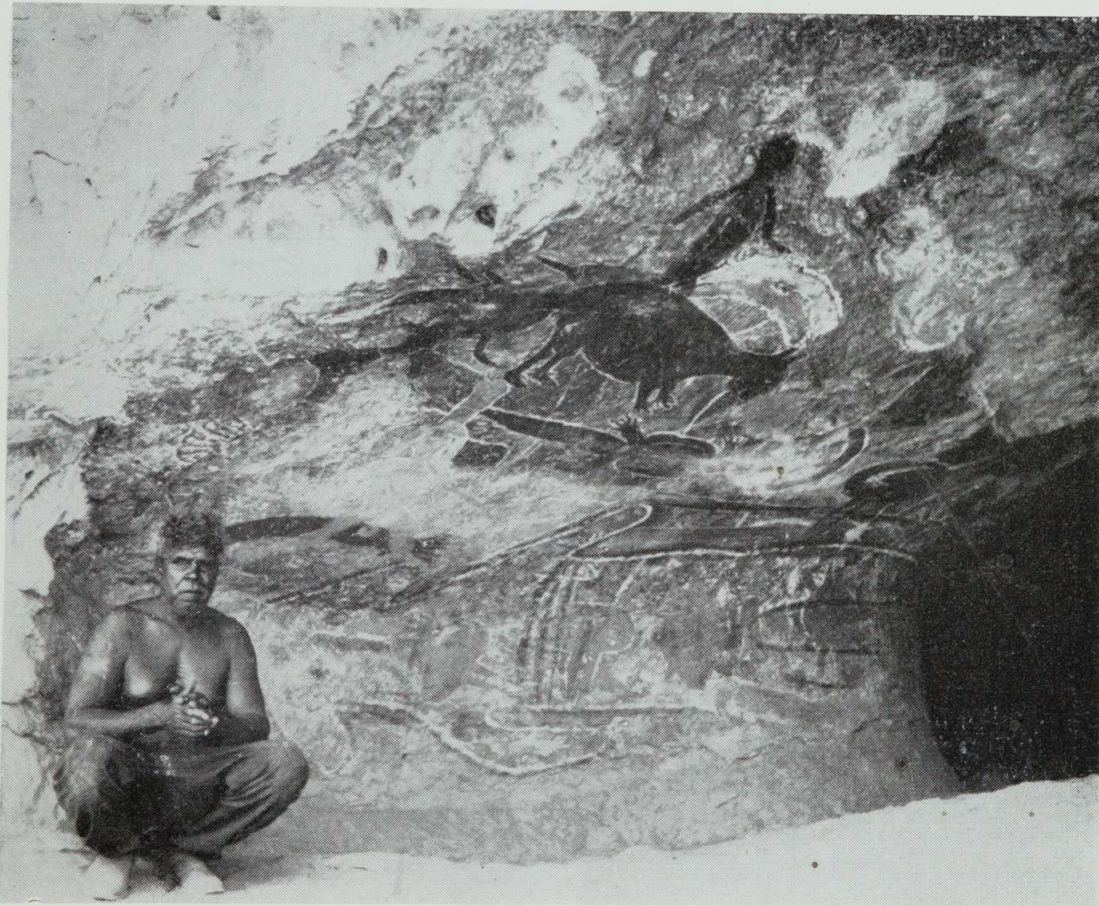
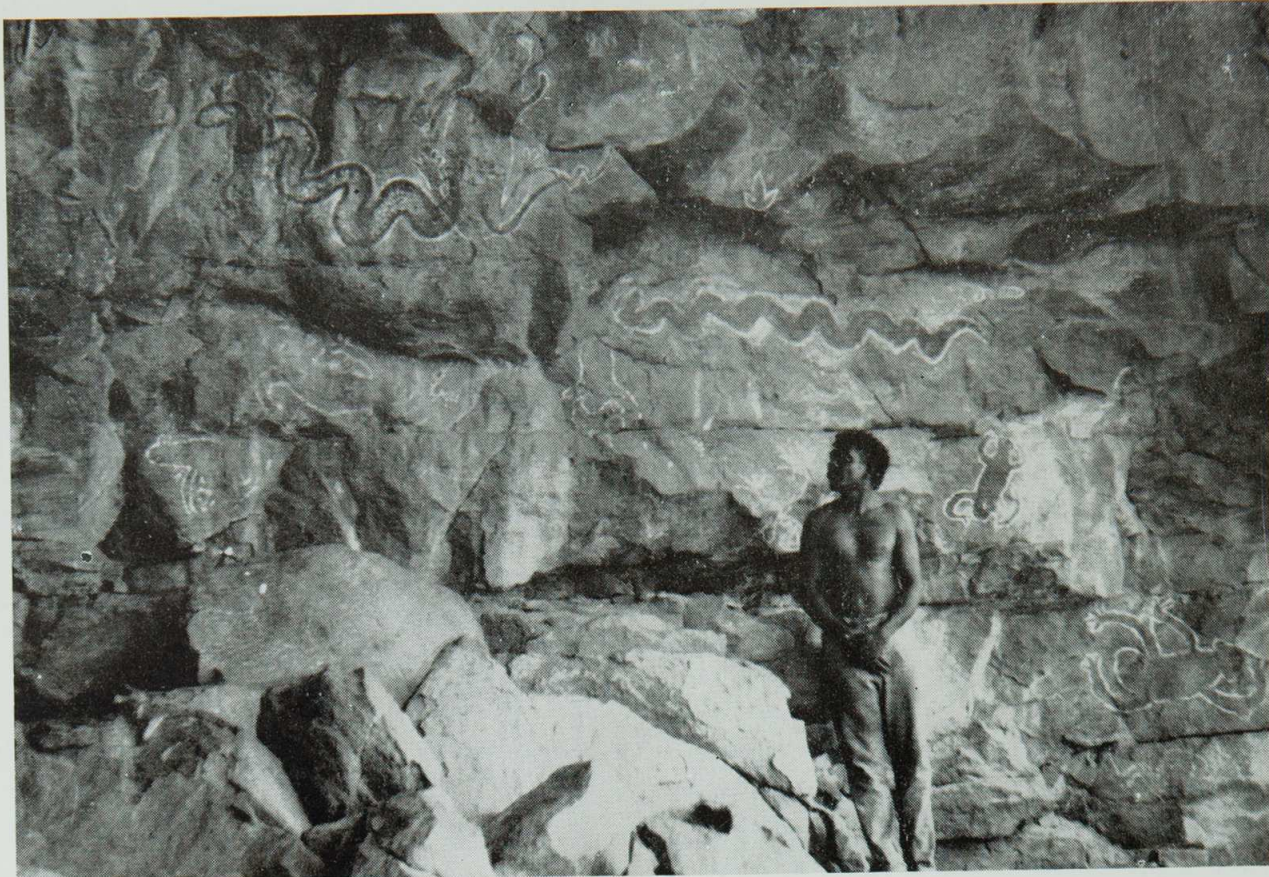


PLATE V

Fig. 1.—*Nurunguni* figures in a cave beside Linesman Creek, on the south side of the Oscar Range. Bunaba tribal territory. Map locality 7.

Fig. 2.—*Nurunguni* paintings at Menyous Gap, in Kuniandi tribal country. Map locality 8. The main figure, which is shown lying on its side is of *Nurunguni-Gnarboo*, the All-Father. Other paintings depict *Nurunguni-Junba*, the arm of *Nurunguni-Gnarboo*, emus, a crocodile, a kangaroo, a spirit child, clouds, falling rain, and a boomerang.

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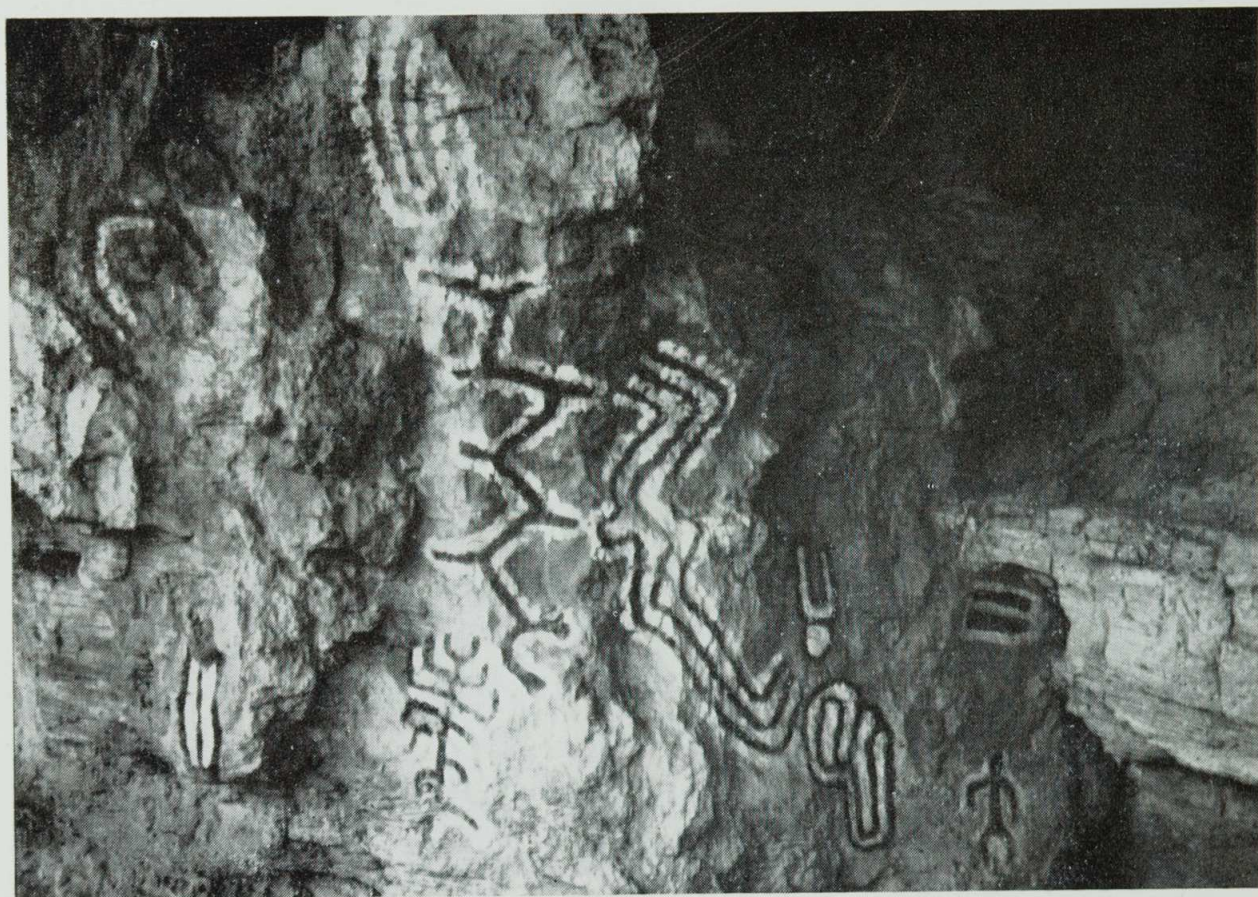


PLATE VI

Fig. 1.—Cave gallery near Elgie Cliffs homestead, in territory of the Gidya Tribe. Map locality 9. The *Nurunguni* figures include snakes (probably the rainbow serpent), frogs and a wallaby.

Fig. 2.—Paintings in a cave in Mangala country, near Dampier Downs homestead. Map locality 11. The designs symbolize the journeyings of the All-Father during the primeval dream-time. Note also the small human figure on the right.

The Rock Paintings

The rock paintings described in this paper occur in the tribal territories of the Unggumi, Bunaba, Kuniandi, Gidya, Nyigina, and Mangala Tribes.

Unggumi Tribe

Paintings have been studied from three localities in Unggumi country, on the northern side of the Napier Range near Windjana Gorge. This gorge is one of the most impressive physiographic features of the Kimberley District. It is formed where the Lennard River has cut through the limestones of the Napier Range, 70 miles east of Derby. On the southern side of the Napier Range the territories of the Unggumi and Bunaba Tribes met at Windjana Gorge, but on the northern side of the range the Unggumi extended several miles east of the gorge. The Bunaba name for the gorge is "Talay," and on most maps of Western Australia it is called "Devils Pass," a name which is probably due to some "devil-like" Aboriginal paintings in a cave near the eastern entrance to the gorge. Other paintings are known $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-north-east of the gorge and between the gorge and Carpenters Gap.

Burrallumma Spring.—On the north side of the Napier Range, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-north-east of Windjana Gorge, there is a permanent freshwater spring, known to the Aborigines as Burrallumma (map locality 1). In a small limestone cave 25 yards west of the spring there is an impressive painting of two large dingoes (Plate I, Fig. 1). The paintings are 8 feet wide, and are executed in white clay, red ochre, yellow ochre, and charcoal. Both animals are shown defecating, and the anus of each is strongly outlined in brilliant red ochre. Other small paintings are drawn around the dingoes, including stars (*windinya*), the bardi grub, small men, and a number of shapeless unidentified objects. The general name used by the Unggumi for such rock paintings is *Manjimanjigardingi*.

Unfortunately full details of the myth connected with this painting now appear to be lost. Only two male members of the Unggumi Tribe are alive today. I interviewed Paddy (*Dijul*), the older of these two men, but he had never visited this cave, though he knew of its existence. He later confirmed the story about the paintings given to me by an old Ungarinyin man named Napier Paddy (*Pandamarra*). This man has lived most of his life on Napier Downs Station in Unggumi tribal country, and he had visited the cave several years before with old Unggumi men. It appears that the two dingoes (called *kia*) came from the Leopold Downs area, where they were responsible for clearing all the trees from the wide black-soil plains, during the far-off dream-time (*Ungud*). They travelled along the north side of the Napier Range to Burrallumma, where they dug a deep hole which they filled with water to form the present spring. Following this they went to the nearby cave and turned into paintings. The reason why the dingoes are shown defecating was either not known by my informant or he was unwilling to tell. He

did not know the mythological significance of the other smaller paintings in the cave.

Windjana Gorge.—In the limestone cliff about 300 yards south-east of the eastern entrance to Windjana Gorge, there is a large cave following a bedding plane in the limestone (map locality 2). It is decorated by numerous paintings of men and animals, the main feature being a large male *Wandjina* figure 6 feet 9 inches high, standing upright (Plate I, Fig. 2). He is drawn in white clay and red ochre, and shows most of the features of the *Wandjina* paintings of the Worora and Ungarinyin, including the horseshoe-shaped band around his head, and the lack of a mouth. However unlike *Wandjinas* of these tribes his sex is clearly indicated. Two small figures beneath his feet may be his children. On his left-hand side are two devil-like figures with long ears and upstretched hands, painted in red ochre, on each side of a large yam. Similar "devils" are painted in other parts of the cave. It seems very likely that each of these figures is of a "lightning man," though I was unable to confirm this. The Worora paint similar figures which they call *Nura Nura*, "the lightning man," the main feature of this person being his long ears (see Plate II, Fig. 1). *Nura Nura* is believed to be responsible for the lightning during the closing stages of a rain storm. Other paintings in the cave include a dingo, further human figures, crocodiles, and several stencilled hands.

I was unable to learn much about this gallery from the natives, though several knew of its existence, and one Bunaba man told me that his hand was stencilled there. The Unggumi use the name *Wandjina* to describe the main figure in the cave, and I was told that his main function was to bring the rain every wet season. My Unggumi informant told me that in addition to touching up the painting it was necessary to break a certain tree near the *Wandjina* cave in order to bring rain.

Below the *Wandjina* cave is another cave with a smoke-blackened roof and a clay floor, which may serve as a good site for archaeological excavations, both for Aboriginal and animal remains. It is interesting to note that the bones of the giant extinct marsupial *Diprotodon australis* were found in gravels near the western entrance to Windjana Gorge by the first geologist to visit the area (Hardman 1887).

Between Windjana Gorge and Carpenters Gap.—About 2 miles east-south-east from Windjana Gorge, on the north side of the Napier Range, is another large cave containing a typical male *Wandjina* figure (map locality 3). The cave is about 1 mile from Carpenters Gap, and is in Unggumi tribal territory.

The *Wandjina* is shown lying on his side and is 5 feet 9 inches long (Plate II, Fig. 2). He is painted in orange and red ochre, white clay, and charcoal, and has eyes but no nose or mouth. Beside his head is a small female *Wandjina*. A few other poorly executed paintings occur in this cave, and there are numerous grooves cut in the limestone rocks, the purpose of which is not known.

I could not locate any natives who knew this cave, though I was assured that it must be in

original Unggumi country. Further paintings in the area once occupied by this tribe along the Napier Range have been noted by other geologists, but I have not been able to visit them.

Bunaba Tribe

The Bunaba Tribe occupied the country west of the Fitzroy River around Fitzroy Crossing, the Oscar Range, the northern end of the Napier Range, and the southern part of Leopold Downs Station.

Numerous caves and rock shelters occur in the limestones of the Napier and Oscar Ranges, and many are decorated with paintings. The Bunaba deny that these are actually paintings, and refer to them as *Nurunguni* or, less often, *Djeralli*. The *Nurunguni* are said to be men and animals who inhabited the world during the far-off dreamtime and who left their images in caves (*Nowani*) after their journeyings were over. *Nurunguni* is also a name for the dreamtime, other expressions for this primeval period in the Bunaba language being *Ungud* and *Djurda*, terms which are also common to the Unggumi tongue. Bunaba men told me that even prior to white settlement the paintings were never touched up by natives, in fact several of them told me severely that to touch any of the *Nurunguni* would result in the crippling of the offending limb.

Typical *Wandjina*-type paintings occur in Bunaba territory, and these are referred to as *Nurunguni-Nowungoo*. *Nowungoo* is the Bunaba word for father, and the figure represented in the paintings is supposed to be the All-Father, who journeyed through the tribal territory during the far-off dreamtime creating the physical features of the country. With him were the first representatives of the various animal and plant species. At the end of their journeying they went to the caves and rock shelters, leaving their images in the rock. I was told that there was only one All-Father, but he left his image in a number of different localities. There does not seem to be any clear connection between the *Nurunguni-Nowungoo* and rainmaking, even though he is shown as a typical *Wandjina*. Moreover I was told that his horseshoe-shaped headdress is the rainbow. Rain-making was achieved in the Bunaba Tribe by means of "rain stones."

The rainbow serpent forms an important part of Bunaba mythology. He is generally referred to as *Ungeroo*, but is sometimes called *Galeru* or *Ungud*. He is believed to have made the water-holes, and his present function is to keep up the supply of spirit children in these water-holes, from which they can be incarnated through the "dreams" of their fathers.

Numerous paintings have been found in the Oscar Range, and only the more interesting of these will be described here.

¼-mile south-east of Elimberrie Spring.—Elimberrie is a well-known permanent spring on the north side of the Oscar Range. A large cave is present in the limestone just to the south-east of the spring (map locality 4), and this is decorated with numerous Aboriginal paintings. The main figure is that of a man about 5 feet tall, painted entirely in red ochre, and having long ears. He is probably a "lightning man,"

equivalent to *Nura Nura* of the Worora. Another smaller "lightning man" is present in another part of the cave, and is overpainted by a rainbow-serpent (*Ungeroo*), in red ochre and white clay, which is 5 feet 9 inches long (Plate III, Fig. 1). Another smaller rainbow serpent is present above it, and there are several other paintings nearby, including a small figure which is probably that of a spirit child.

2¼ miles west-north-west of Elimberrie Spring.—At this place (map locality 5) there is a small cave with numerous paintings of *Ungeroo*, the rainbow serpent, together with small human figures. They are painted in white clay and red and yellow ochre. Some of the small human figures show a "rainbow" headdress. Several stencilled hands occur in the cave, and there is one stencilled boomerang.

3¾ miles west-north-west of Elimberrie Spring.—The cliffs which mark the north side of the Oscar Range in this area are almost vertical, and are 250 to 300 feet high (map locality 6). There are a number of rock shelters at the foot of these cliffs, and some of them are decorated with *Nurunguni* paintings. The best locality is $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles west-north-west of Elimberrie. It contains large numbers of paintings, many of them well-executed, the most striking figure being that of *Nurunguni-Nowungoo*, drawn in white clay, charcoal, and red ochre (Plate III, Fig. 2). The painting stands 4 feet high, and closely resembles the *Wandjina* paintings of the northern tribes. He has no mouth, but there is a strange horizontal line drawn between the eyes and nose, the meaning of which I have not determined. A series of lines in red ochre are shown radiating from his rainbow headdress. Similar lines in *Wandjina* paintings of the Ungarinyin Tribe are regarded as the hair. A further representation of *Nurunguni-Nowungoo* is shown in the shelter, drawn in white clay over an older figure in red ochre. Numerous other human figures are present, including two "stick-men," painted in white clay, on each side of a yam (Plate IV, Fig. 1). The men have long ears and may be "lightning men"; the representation strongly resembles that in the cave near the eastern entrance to Windjana Gorge in Unggumi country (Plate I, Fig. 2).

The rock shelter also contains representations of crocodiles, a kangaroo, and various other animals, together with numerous stencilled hands.

In the rugged limestone country $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile south of the rock shelter there are a number of other paintings at the foot of a smooth massive outcrop. They are of a Bungarra lizard and an eel (Plate IV, Fig. 2) together with small human figures, all painted in red ochre.

Linesman Creek.—An impressive series of paintings occur in the small gorge cut by Linesman Creek, on the south side of the Oscar Range, 4 miles north-west of 12-mile bore (map locality 7). The paintings stare out over the gorge from a cave 40 feet up in the eastern limestone wall. The cliff-face in front of the cave can only be ascended with great difficulty. I managed to do so, but could not get down again until a rope was thrown up. It seemed

clear that the natives would not have got in and out of the cave in this fashion, and eventually I succeeded in locating an entrance to the cave on top of the cliff. The natives have marked this entrance with a white representation of a snake, drawn as though emerging from the opening. The entrance is a narrow solution pipe which descends almost vertically for 30 feet.

The *Nurunguni* figures in the cave are large men, painted in red ochre, the tallest standing 4 feet high (Plate V, Fig. 1). Two have the long ears of "lightning men," while another is shown upside-down. A similar painting I saw in Gidya country was said to be a frog *Nurunguni* "going down for water."

I met only one native who knew this cave, and he could not tell me anything regarding the significance of the paintings. Like other Bunaba people he did not regard the *Nurunguni* as paintings, but said that they had left themselves in the cave during the "long time" dreamtime. He thought that the cave was named *Bunjadi*.

I have been told by Aborigines of other important cave galleries in Bunaba country, located near Lily Hole Spring on Leopold Downs Station, and behind the abandoned Oscar Range homestead. Each of these galleries is said to feature a large *Nurunguni-Nowungoo*.

Kuniandi Tribe

The tribal country occupied by the Kuniandi embraced the country east of the Fitzroy River on Gogo, Fossil Downs, Louisa Downs, and Margaret River Stations. Much of this country is occupied by limestone ranges, with many caves, and several galleries are said to be present in this area. The only one that I have studied in any detail is at Menyous Gap, 20 miles south-east of Fitzroy Crossing (map locality 8). The natives tell me that this is the best of the galleries in Kuniandi territory. I briefly saw other paintings at Mountain Home Spring, in the Home Range.

Menyous Gap.—Menyous Gap is a dry pass through the Pillara Range, on Gogo (Margaret Downs) Station. The cave with paintings is situated on the eastern wall of the gap, near the southern entrance. Menyous Gap is known to the natives as Youalon, but there does not seem to be a special name for the cave. The general name for cave used by the Kuniandi is *Duu*, or sometimes *Najee*, a name which comes from the Wolmadjari language.

The cave is decorated with many paintings in charcoal, white clay, and red ochre (Plate V, Fig. 2). The Kuniandi use the same name for the paintings as the Bunaba, that is *Nurunguni*. They also believe that the *Nurunguni* are people and animals who wandered the earth during the far-off dreamtime and left their images in the caves. The main figure in the cave at Menyous Gap is *Nurunguni-Gnarboo*, the All-Father. *Gnarboo* is also the name used for a person's natural father, corresponding to *Nowungoo* of the Bunaba. *Nurunguni-Gnarboo* is regarded as the creator who made all the features of the landscape, together with the grass, trees, etc. The animals shown in the cave accom-

panied him, and were the first representatives of their particular species. The Kuniandi believed that the *Nurunguni-Gnarboo* brings the rain, and until relatively recently the painting used to be touched up towards the close of each dry season to ensure the normal arrival of the "wet." The *Nurunguni-Gnarboo* painting in Menyous Gap is 9 feet 6 inches long. He is drawn in red ochre, white clay, and charcoal. His unusual horseshoe-shaped head is said to represent the rainbow, and he differs from other *Wandjina*-type paintings in having a mouth, and having three cicatrices across his chest. Above the head is a large arm painted in red ochre, and I was told that this was also the arm of the All-Father, pointing towards his own image, indicating "this is me." Above and across this arm is a human figure in white clay with a tall paper-bark headdress. This is said to be *Nurunguni-Junba*, who first introduced the Junba Corroboree in the "long-time" dreamtime. Above him is a crocodile (*lalanggarra*), and a kangaroo (*djeroo*). Astride the kangaroo is a spirit child (*jinganyara*), and beside it are clouds (*urrieroo*) with falling rain (*beedi*). There are also several representations of turtle (*junggur*) and emus (*kulnagnanja*), a single boomerang (*kylie*) and the rainbow serpent (*Galeru*).

Gidya Tribe

During the course of my geological work in the Kimberleys I have had little contact with the Gidya Tribe, as their territory lies outside the sedimentary basin where Wapet is prospecting for oil. However I made one quick geological trip to Bedford Downs Station, which is in Gidya country, and was shown a gallery about 2 miles west-north-west of Elgie Cliffs homestead (map locality 9) by a native named Clifton (*Jongarrie*). The gallery is in a large cave situated high in a cliff face near a permanent spring, in a district known to the natives as *Kulowali*. This locality is close to the boundary between the West, East, and North Kimberley Regions.

The main feature of the paintings (Plate VI, Fig. 1), which are referred to as *Nurunguni*, is a series of snakes, probably representing the rainbow serpent, though I was not able to confirm this. There are also frogs, some of which were said to be "going down for water," birds, wallabies, stencilled hands, and a representation of the sun.

Owing to the small amount of time I spent in Gidya country I was not able to learn much regarding the significance of the paintings to the natives. However it appears that the Gidya, like the Bunaba, do not connect the *Nurunguni* with rain-making, and they do not believe that the paintings were put there by Aborigines. The Gidya and Bunaba languages are very similar, and their mythological beliefs may also correspond rather closely.

Nyigina Tribe

The territory occupied by the Nyigina Tribe followed the Fitzroy River from Derby to near Fitzroy Crossing. I have seen only one gallery

in Nyigina country and this is situated on the west side of Mt. Anderson, 2½ miles north-west of the homestead (map locality 10).

The gallery is located in a sandstone rock shelter, and is characterized by the presence of numerous stencilled hands. Some stone-axe stencils are also present, and I have not seen these in any of the other galleries of the West Kimberley. There are also several paintings of human figures, the most striking being that of a man with his arms in the air. I was told that he was *Eballa* or *Uloo*, the All-Father, but obtained conflicting reports as to whether he and the other figures were drawn by natives. One old man told me that *Bugarara* (dream-time) made the paintings, but another said that it was always known that the paintings were the work of natives, and they were nothing to do with *Bugarara*. The latter informant said that the most important function of the paintings, and of the stencillings in particular, was to serve as mementoes of the persons who made them. After a man died a painting or hand stencilling made by him would be viewed reverently by his near relatives, and would serve to remind them of him for many years.

The gallery also contains paintings of the rainbow serpent, a few animals, and various symbolic paintings in concentric and radiating designs. The radiating designs are said to represent the routes of the various ancestors of the tribe in reaching Mt. Anderson. All the paintings are referred to as *Womba*.

A few paintings, now very much eroded, are present in a large cave with a permanent spring of fresh water, located about ¼-mile from the rock shelter. I was unable to determine a name for the rock shelter or the cave, but the natives refer to Mt. Anderson itself as *Djarmadangabu*.

Mangala Tribe

The Mangala is one of the desert tribes, which occupied the area around the Edgar Ranges, south of the Fitzroy River. I have only seen one example of the rock art of these people; it is situated in a sandstone cave about ½-mile south-west of the abandoned Dampier Downs homestead (map locality 11).

The paintings in this cave (Plate VI, Fig. 2) have been drawn in charcoal and white clay and are of a radically different type from the others described in this paper. They feature zigzag and hooked designs, and one conventionalized human figure, quite different from the rock paintings of the area north of the Fitzroy River. Designs of this type are a feature of the sacred boards (*koonarri*, *yiring yiring mandagi*, *pullawonoo*) and weapons of the southern Kimberley tribes, and they symbolize the paths taken by the All-Father during his journeyings in the long-past dreamtime. Mangala men know that the paintings were drawn by natives, though it appears that the women may be told of a supernatural origin for them.

I have not seen any rock paintings in the country occupied by the Karadjeri, Wolmadjari, and Djaru, other desert tribes bordering on the West Kimberley Region. However I was told that there is a good gallery in Wolmadjari territory, in the Poole Range. There are relatively few good caves in the desert country, and the artistic instincts of the men of these tribes are mainly directed towards the carving of their sacred boards, which are often beautifully decorated with intricate designs.

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